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GROUP 2155 "

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RE: Application Serial No.: 10/058,082
Applicants: Keisuke KATAOKA, et al.
Filing Date: January 29, 2002
For: SERVER DEVICE, METHOD FOR SUPPORTING MEMBER REGISTRATION, RECORDING MEDIUM AND DATA SIGNAL EMBODIED IN A CARRIER WAVE
Group Art Unit: 2155
Examiner: HAMZA, Faruk

SIR:

Attached hereto for filing are the following papers:

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
VERIFICATION OF AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF JAPANESE PRIORITY DOCUMENT NO. 2001-020551

Our check in the amount of is attached covering any required fees. In the event any variance exists between the amount enclosed and the Patent Office charges for filing the above-noted documents, including any fees required under 37 C.F.R 1.136 for any necessary Extension of Time to make the filing of the attached documents timely, please charge or credit the difference to our Deposit Account No. 15-0030. Further, if these papers are not considered timely filed, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 for the necessary extension of time. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Yuhei TOHNO, residing at Fujisawa 1-10-5, Fujisawa-shi, Kanagawa, JAPAN, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I well understand the Japanese Language and the English language and that the attached English translation of a certified copy of Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-020551 is true, correct and faithful translation to the best of my knowledge and belief from the Japanese language into the English language.

Dated this 21st day of February, 2006

Yuhei Tohno

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JAPAN PATENT OFFICE

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the following application as filed with this Office.

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Application Number:	Application for Patent 2001-020551
Applicant:	Ricoh Company, Ltd.

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Commissioner, Kozo OIKAWA (Seal)
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[Name of Item]	Specification	1
[Name of Item]	Drawing	1
[Name of Item]	Abstract	1

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[Name of the Document] Specification

[Title of the Invention] Method for Supporting Online Registration, Server Device, and Program

[Claims]

[Claim 1]

A method for supporting online registration, comprising:

a potential member registration step of performing registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding a customer;

a new member registration step of performing registration as a new member by receiving information regarding a customer via a communication network;

a previous registration determination step of determining whether the member registered at said new member registration step has previously been registered at said potential member registration step; and

a sales information notification step of, when it is determined at said previous registration determination step that a member to be registered at said new member registration step has previously been registered at said potential member registration step, preparing an e-mail showing information showing the member, information showing the determination result, and information regarding the member registered at said new member registration step, and sending it to a customer's corresponding staff via a communication network.

[Claim 2]

The method according to claim 1, wherein

when it is determined at said previous registration determination step that the member to be registered at said new member registration step has previously been registered at said potential member registration step,

the new member registration step acquires information regarding the customer registered at said potential member registration step;

presents the customer information acquired at said customer information acquiring step to the customer via said communication network; and

receives change of the customer information presented at said registration supporting step, and

the sales information notification step, when the change is received at said new member registration step, notifies the customer's corresponding staff of information showing a detail of the change by said e-mail having the information added thereon.

[Claim 3]

The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said sales information notification step comprises a registered information analyzing step of analyzing the information registered at said new member registration step, and

selects a customer's corresponding staff to whom said e-mail is sent, based on a result of the analysis at said registered information analyzing step.

[Claim 4]

The method according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein said new member registration step comprises a notification confirmation step of notifying the member that the registered information will be notified to the customer's corresponding staff and asking the member's approval, and

said sales information notification step, only if the member's approval is obtained at said notification confirmation step, sends said e-mail, to said customer's corresponding staff.

[Claim 5]

A server device comprising:

a potential member registration section which performs registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding the customer;

a connection section which connects to a communication network through which a plurality of customer terminals are connected with customer's corresponding staff terminals;

a new member registration section which performs registration as a new member by registering information regarding the customer via said communication network;

a previous registration determination section which determines whether the member to be registered in said new member registration section has previously been registered in said potential member registration section; and

a sales information notification section which, when said previous registration determination section determines that the member to be registered in said new member registration section has previously been registered in said potential member registration section, prepares an e-mail showing information showing the member, information showing the determination result, and information registered in said new member registration section, and sends said e-mail to said customer's corresponding staff terminal via said communication network.

[Claim 6]

The server device according to claim 5, wherein, when said previous registration determination section determines that the member to be registered in said new member registration section has been previously registered in said potential member registration section, said new member registration section

obtains information regarding the customer registered in said potential member registration section,

sends the obtained customer information to the customer terminal of the customer via said communication network by controlling said connection section, and

receives the change to said sent customer information via said communication network, and wherein

said sales information notification section, when a change to said customer information is received by said new member registration section, adds information showing the details of the change to said e-mail and send it to said customer's corresponding staff terminal.

[Claim 7]

The server device according to claim 5 or 6, wherein

said sales information notification section comprises registered information analyzing section which analyzes information registered to said new member registration section; and

selects a customer's corresponding staff terminal to which said e-mail is sent, based on the result of the analysis at said registered information analyzing section.

[Claim 8]

The server device according to any one of claims 5 to 7, wherein

said new member registration section comprises a notification confirmation section which notifies the member that the registered information is notified to a customer's corresponding staff; and

said sales information notification section sends said e-mail to said customer's corresponding staff terminal only if said notification confirmation section obtains the approval from the member.

[Claim 9]

A program for making a computer serve as:

potential member registration means which performs registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding the customer;

communication means which connects to a communication network, sends and receives information via said communication network;

new member registration means which performs registration as a new member by registering information regarding a customer via said communication network by controlling said communication means;

previous registration determination means which determines whether the member registered in said new member registration means has previously been registered in said potential member;

sales information preparation means which, when said previous registration determination means determines that the member registered in said new member registration means has previously been registered in said potential member registration means, prepares an e-mail showing at least information showing the member,

information showing the determination result, and information regarding the member registered in said new member registration means;

a customer's corresponding staff database to which information regarding customer's corresponding staff is registered;

sales information sending means which controls said communication means to send said e-mail prepared by said sales information preparation mans and sends it to a customer's corresponding staff registered in said customer's corresponding staff database.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention]

This invention relates to a method of supporting online registration, a server device, and a program, and particularly relates to a method of supporting online registration, a server device, and a program which make electric commerce and real sales activity cooperate with each other by utilizing the e-mail, to thereby improve business efficiency and customer satisfaction.

[0002]

[Prior Art]

There has been a sales activity performed conventionally in which reliable relationship between customers and sales staffs is established through allotment of the sales staffs to the customers, in which the sales staffs individually visit their customers to understand product usage and various demands of the customers, and in which products suited for individual customers are proposed.

[0003]

On the other hand, in accordance with the rapid widespread of the Internet in recent years, electric commerce using the Internet is practiced commonly. Such electric commerce in many case, adopts a membership system in which only registered members enjoys services. It is common, in this case, that a user can accomplish membership registration by registering information regarding himself/herself (so-called

online registration).

[0004]

However, in a case where a customer obtained through conventional sales activity carried out by a sales staff purchases a product, his/her registration of customer information (user registration, etc.) has commonly been accomplished by postcard, facsimile, or telephone. Resultingly, when a conventional customer utilizes the electric commerce, he/she inputs his/her customer information for the second time, which is bothersome for the customers. Further, a dealer might have duplicated customer information, and thus it is not rational.

[0005]

Further, also regarding products sold through the electric commerce, it is possible to achieve improvement in sales by, for example, carrying out after services, etc. by actual sales activity of sales staffs. In the online registration, however, the customer information is merely registered in a server providing a web site or to a server in a head office, etc. of the dealer. Thus it is difficult for each sales staff to grasp the registered information. Accordingly, sales staffs cannot grasp the form of usage of the customer, and cannot develop an effective sales activity.

[0006]

Further, in a case where sales staffs are allotted to respective customers, a reliable relationship between the customers and their corresponding sales staffs has already been established. Even after that electric commerce usage spreads due to its convenience, still important is the sales activity via the sales staffs. It is accordingly desired, while utilizing the convenience of the electric commerce, to establish a method for supporting a sales activity of conventional sales staffs.

Not being limited to the sales staffs, service staffs, maintenance staffs have similar problems.

[0007]

[Problems to be solved by the invention]

The present invention is made in view of this, and it is an object of the preset invention to provide a method for supporting online registration, a server device, and a program which, by utilizing e-mail, performs electric commerce and real sales activity in cooperation with each other, to thereby improve business efficiency and customer satisfaction.

[0008]

[Means for solving the problem]

To achieve the above object, a method for supporting online registration according to a first aspect of the present invention comprises:

a potential member registration step of performing registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding a customer;

a new member registration step of performing registration as a new member by receiving information regarding a customer via a communication network;

a previous registration determination step of determining whether the member registered at the new member registration step has previously been registered at the potential member registration step; and

a sales information notification step of, when it is determined at the previous registration determination step that a member to be registered at the new member registration step has previously been registered at the potential member registration step, preparing an e-mail showing information showing the member, information showing the determination result, and information regarding the member registered at the new member registration step, and sending it to a customer's corresponding staff via a communication network.

[0009]

According to the above structure, for example, when user registration of a user whose user registration has been accomplished in a conventional manner, by postcard, facsimile, or telephone, etc., is done from a web site on the Internet, the registration is notified to a customer's corresponding staff (for example, a sales staff of products or services, or a service maintenance staff, etc.) by e-mail, and a customer's corresponding

staff can grasp newest customer information. Thus it becomes possible to utilize the information for a prompt sales activity.

[0010]

In the method of supporting online registration, it is preferable that

when it is determined at the previous registration determination step that the member to be registered at the new member registration step has previously been registered at the potential member registration step,

the new member registration step acquires information regarding the customer registered at the potential member registration step;

presents the customer information acquired at the customer information acquiring step to the customer via the communication network; and

receives change of the customer information presented at the registration supporting step, and

the sales information notification step, when the change is received at the new member registration step, notifies the customer's corresponding staff of information showing a detail of the change by the e-mail having the information added thereon.

[0011]

According to such structure, when a user whose user registration is previously accomplished carried out the user registration, customer information which has been already registered is inserted to, for example, the sending form page and presented to the customer. Thus it is only necessary for the customer to correct, if any, customer information to be changed, and therefore the load of operation for registration is lightened. Further, when there is any change, because a notification notifying that is forwarded to a customer's corresponding staff, the customer's corresponding staff can grasp the newest customer information.

[0012]

In the method of supporting online registration, it is preferable that

the sales information notification step comprises a registered information analyzing step of analyzing the information registered at the new member registration step, and

selects a customer's corresponding staff to whom the e-mail is sent, based on a result of the analysis at the registered information analyzing step

[0013]

According to such structure, for example, an appropriate customer's corresponding staff is selected in accordance with the customer's corresponding staff who corresponds to registered members, the kind of products owned by the member, and the address, which therefore contributes to an effective sales activity.

[0014]

In the method of supporting online registration, it is preferable that the new member registration step comprises a notification confirmation step of notifying the member that the registered information will be notified to the customer's corresponding staff and asking the member's approval, and

the sales information notification step, only if the member's approval is obtained at the notification confirmation step, sends the e-mail to the customer's corresponding staff.

[0015]

According to such structure, notification of information to a customer's corresponding staff is forwarded only upon the approval of the customer, and therefore a service with consideration of handling personal information can be performed.

[0016]

To achieve the above object, the server device according to a second aspect of the present invention comprises:

a potential member registration section which performs registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding the customer;

a connection section which connects to a communication network through which a plurality of customer terminals are connected with customer's corresponding staff terminals;

a new member registration section which performs registration as a new member by registering information regarding the customer via the communication network;

a previous registration determination section which determines whether the member to be registered in the new member registration section has previously been registered in the potential member registration section; and

a sales information notification section which, when the previous registration determination section determines that the member to be registered in the new member registration section has previously been registered in the potential member registration section, prepares an e-mail showing information showing the member, information showing the determination result, and information registered in the new member registration section, and sends the e-mail to the customer's corresponding staff terminal via the communication network.

[0017]

In the above server device, it is preferable that, when said previous registration determination section determines that the member to be registered in the new member registration section has been previously registered in the potential member registration section, the new member registration section

obtains information regarding the customer registered in the potential member registration section,

sends the obtained customer information to the customer terminal of the customer via the communication network by controlling the connection section, and

receives the change to the sent customer information via the communication network, and wherein

the sales information notification section, when a change to the customer information is received by the new member registration section, adds information

showing the details of the change to the e-mail and send it to the customer's corresponding staff terminal.

[0018]

In the above server device, it is preferable that the sales information notification section comprises registered information analyzing section which analyzes information registered in the new member registration section; and

selects a customer's corresponding staff terminal to which the e-mail is sent, based on the result of the analysis at the registered information analyzing section.

[0019]

In the above server device, it is preferable that the new member registration section comprises a notification confirmation section which notifies the member that the registered information is notified to a customer's corresponding staff; and

the sales information notification section sends the e-mail to the customer's corresponding staff terminal only if the notification confirmation section obtains the approval from the member.

[0020]

To achieve the above object, a program according to a third aspect of the present invention makes a computer serve as:

potential member registration means which performs registration as a potential member by previously registering information regarding the customer;

communication means which connects to a communication network, sends and receives information via the communication network;

new member registration means which performs registration as a new member by registering information regarding a customer via the communication network by controlling the communication means;

previous registration determination means which determines whether the member registered in the new member registration means has previously been registered in the potential member;

sales information preparation means which, when the previous registration determination means determines that the member registered in the new member registration means has previously been registered in the potential member registration means, prepares an e-mail showing at least information showing the member, information showing the determination result, and information regarding the member registered in the new member registration means;

a customer's corresponding staff database to which information regarding customer's corresponding staff is registered;

sales information sending means which controls the communication means to send the e-mail prepared by the sales information preparation mans and sends it to a customer's corresponding staff registered in the customer's corresponding staff database.

[0021]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

An embodiment according to the present invention will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0022]

FIG. 1 is a diagram showing a configuration of an online registration supporting system according to the present invention. As shown in the figure, an online registration supporting system 1 comprises a server 100, a communication network 200, user terminals 300-1 to 300-n, and sales staff terminals 400-1 to 400-n.

[0023]

The server 100 is constituted of, for example, a main flame computer and a work station managed by a seller of product items, etc., and provides a web page containing information such as product information which is accessible through a user terminal 300 via the communication network 200, as well as notifying sales information to a sales staff terminal 400. The detailed structure of the server 100 is described later with reference to FIG. 2. In the present embodiment, a seller of office machines is described as an example of the seller of product items.

[0024]

The communication network 200 is, for example, the Internet, and connects the server 100, the user terminal 300, and the corresponding sales staff terminal 400 mutually. In the present embodiment, the Internet is adopted as the communication network 200, and hereafter the explanation goes with the Internet 200 as the communication network 200.

[0025]

The user terminal 300 is constituted of, for example, a general-purpose computer, such as a personal computer, comprising a control section, a storage section, and a display section, and is configured to be able to be connected to the Internet 200 by a communication device such as a modem or a TA (Terminal Adapter). In the storage section of the user terminal 300, a program for browsing a web page provided through the Internet 200 is installed and is so configured as to enable browsing attained by receiving a web page and displaying it on the display section by executing program by the CPU (Central Processing Unit) of the user terminal 300.

[0026]

The sales staff terminal 400 is a terminal carried by a sales staff of sellers of product items, and is exemplified by a general-purpose computer such as a personal computer, a mobile information terminal such as a PDA (Personal Data Assistants), and a mobile communication terminal such as a mobile phone or a PHS (Personal Handyphone System) capable of sending and receiving an e-mail.

[0027]

Next, a configuration of the server 100 is described with reference to FIG. 2. FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the configuration of the server 100.

[0028]

As shown in FIG. 2, the server 100 comprises a control section110, a customer information database 120, a member information database 130, a staff information database 140, a web server 150, a mail server 160, and a communication section 170.

[0029]

The control section110 is constituted of a CPU (Central Processing Unit) and controls each section of the server 100 by executing an operation program previously stored in a memory, which is not shown, to thereby execute a processing described later.

[0030]

The customer information database 120 is constituted of, for example, a re-writable storage device, for example, a hard disk device, and stores information regarding a customer (hereafter referred to as "customer information") previously received, as user registration, by means of conventional postcard, facsimile, or telephone. FIG. 3 (a) shows an example of customer information to be stored in the customer information database 120.

[0031]

As illustrated in the figure, the user ID assigned upon the user registration, the name of the customer, the mail address, the information showing the product owned by a customer and sold by the seller of product item, contact information such as a phone number or an address, the staff ID showing the sales staff corresponding to the customer, are registered in the customer information database 120. It is assumed that the user ID assigned upon user registration has been notified to the customer.

[0032]

The member information database 130 is constituted of, for example, a re-writable storage device such as a hard disk device, and stores personal information which is received on a web site provided through the server 100 and which is registered in accordance with the member registration for electric commerce (hereafter referred to as "online registration".) FIG. 3 (b) shows an example of member information stored in member information database 130.

[0033]

As shown in the figure, the user ID, any password necessary on logging in the electric commerce, the name of the customer, the mail address, the information showing the product owned by the customer and sold by the seller of product items, contact information such as the phone number, the address, the staff ID of the sales staff

corresponding to the member, are registered in the member information database 130.

[0034]

The staff information database 140 is constituted of, for example, a re-writable storage device such as a hard disk drive, and stores information regarding the sales staff of the seller of product items (hereafter referred to as "staff information"). FIG. 3 shows an example of the staff information stored in the staff information database 140.

[0035]

As shown in the figure, the information showing the staff ID for identifying the sales staff, the name of the staff, the area code showing the corresponding sales area of the staff, the address of mail which can be received by the sales staff terminal 400 of the staff, the information showing product items corresponding to the sales staff, are registered in the staff information database 140.

[0036]

The web server 150 is constituted of a control section that is not shown and a server device comprising a control section and storage section, and prepares a web page showing various information, and stores the information. In the web server 150, the storage section stores a program for preparing a web page, and the control section prepares and updates the web page by executing the program.

[0037]

The mail server 160 is constituted of a server device comprising a control section and storage section that are not shown, and prepares and sends an e-mail addressed to a sales staff. In the storage section of the mail server 160, a fixed phrase and a template used in an e-mail being addressed to a sales staff are previously registered. Further, the storage section stores a program for preparing an e-mail, and the control section executes the program to thereby prepare an e-mail using the fixed form and the template and to send it to a mail address registered on the staff information database 140.

[0038]

The communication section 170 is constituted of a communication device, for example, a rooter or a TA (Terminal Adapter), etc. and connects the server 100 to the Internet 200. The communication section 170 receives an access from the user terminal 300, and sends data showing a web page held in a web server 150 to the user terminal 300 which gains the access, and sends the e-mail prepared by the mail server 160 to the sales staff terminal 400 via the Internet 200.

[0039]

Next, the operation of the online registration supporting system 1 is described with reference to a flowchart of FIG. 4. It is assumed that the web site provided by the server 100 of the present embodiment is a web site of membership system in which only registered member enjoy various services, and that those who are not registered does the member registration (new registration) on the web site. It is also assumed that the control section 110 executes an operation program previously stored in the memory to thereby realize the operation of the server 100.

[0040]

First, when a customer operates the user terminal 300 to access a top page of a web site provided by the server 100 (step S101: Yes), the control section 110 of the server 100 controls the web server 150 to obtain a menu page as shown in FIG. 5 and controls the communication section 170 to transmit the page to the user terminal 300 that gained an access (step S102).

[0041]

The user terminal 300 receives the menu page from the server 100 and makes it displayed on the display section. As shown in FIG. 5, an item linked to each page prepared by the web site is displayed on the menu page. That is to say, each item is in hyper text form and is linked to a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) of a corresponding page. The customer selects a desired item to thereby request sending the page to the server 100.

[0042]

Here, when an item other than the new registration (step S103: No) is selected, the process goes to step S200, and processes such as sending the corresponding page is executed.

[0043]

On the other hand, when the new registration is selected (step S103: Yes), the control section110 controls the web server 150 to obtain a user ID input page as shown in Fig. 6, and controls the communication section 170 to send the page to the user terminal 300 (step S104). On the user ID input page, as sown in FIG. 6, a text box for inputting the user ID is prepared. To a person who has purchased a product item from the seller providing the web site and who has accomplished the user registration, a user ID has been notified. When the customer has a user ID, he/she inputs it to the text box and selects a "send" button. On the other hand, it is assumed that a person who does not have a user ID, selects the "send" button, without inputting anything to the text box.

[0044]

When the server 100 receives a user ID from the user terminal 300 (step S105: Yes), the control section 110 executes a registered information updating process of step S300. The detail is described with reference to the flowchart of FIG. 7.

[0045]

First, the control section110 searches the customer information database 120 with the user ID received at step S105 as a key (step S301), and determines whether there is a record corresponding to the user ID (step S302).

[0046]

When there is no corresponding record (step S302: No), a predetermined error process, such as displaying an error message inquiring whether there is any error in the input matters and prompting re-input, is performed (step S400).

[0047]

On the other hand, when there is the corresponding record, (step S302: Yes), the control section 110 obtains information registered in the corresponding record. (step

S303).

[0048]

The control section 110, further pusses the obtained information to the web server 150, as well as instructing preparation of registered information sending form page containing the obtained information as shown in FIG. 8 (step S304). Here the web server 150 keeps a template of the registered information sending form page template, and prepares the registered information sending form page by filling the template with the information (customer information) passed from the control section 110.

[0049]

The control section 110 controls the communication section 170 to send the registered information sending form page prepared by the web server 150 to the corresponding user terminal 300 (step S304).

[0050]

In the user terminal 300, the received registered information sending form page is displayed on the display section. The registered information sending form page displayed here is in a form in which the information regarding the customer and having been obtained at step S303 and registered in the customer information database 120. That is, customer information based on the user registration upon the customer's previous purchase of a product item is displayed. Here, if there is anything to be changed in the displayed customer information (for example, change of address), the user terminal 300 is operated to correct the item, and the "send" button is selected to thereby sending it to the server 100. If there is nothing to be changed, the "send" button is selected directly, for sending it to the server 100.

[0051]

When the server 100 receives the registered information from the user terminal 300 (step S305: Yes), the control section 110 access the member information database 130, prepares the record of the customer, and registers the received registration

information (step S306)。

[0052]

On the other hand, no sending of the user ID from the user ID input page (step S105: No), is regarded as from a person who has not accomplished the user registration, and a page with each item of the registered information sending form being blank is sent to the user ID or so, and the user registration is thereby accomplished (step S200).

[0053]

Next, the control section 110 obtains a notification confirmation page as shown in FIG. 9 from the web server 150 and controls the communication section 170 to send the page to the user terminal 300 (FIG. 4: stepS106).

[0054]

As shown in FIG. 9, it is described that the information sent from the user terminal 300, namely information showing the change of the information is notified to a sales staff and is used secondarily for, for example, utilization in the future services. In the notification confirmation page, a check box by which that the customer does not wishes such secondary use can be notified is prepared. That is, by inputting a check mark by, for example, clicking the check box, it is notified to the server 100 that the secondary use of the sent information is not wished.

[0055]

In a case where a consent regarding the secondary use in accordance with, for example, a privacy policy provision is obtained, upon the user registration, etc., sending notification confirmation page may be omitted. In this case, consent or dissent to the above-described secondary use of each customer may be confirmed separately, upon user registration, and the information showing consent or dissent may be registered in the customer information database 120. In this case, it is further assumed that change of registered information showing consent or dissent can be requested by a customer. For example, a link to a page on which the change of the information is received is prepared on each page, and the page is accessed and a request for changing the registered information is sent, and the information having been registered in the

customer information database 120 is thereby changed.

[0056]

More particularly, after selecting consent or dissent to the secondary use of sent information, by selecting the "send" button, the information showing consent or dissent is sent to the server 100.

[0057]

In a case where the notification to staffs is not approved, in other words, where the above-described check box is clicked (step S107: No), the process is directly terminated.

[0058]

On the other hand, when the notification to staffs is approved, in other words, the above-described check box is not checked (step S107: Yes), a process for sending an e-mail to the sales staff is performed (step S500). The detail of the process is described with reference to the flowchart of FIG. 10.

[0059]

Firstly, the control section 110 of the server 100 accesses the member information database 130, and obtains the record of the customer (step S501).

[0060]

Next, the control section 110 obtains staff ID of the sales staff from the record, and obtains a mail address of the staff from the staff information database 140 (step S502).

[0061]

The control section 110 instructs the mail server 160 to pass the mail address of the sales staff obtained at step S502 and to prepare an e-mail showing that the customer accomplished the member registration (stepS503). In a case where there has been any change to the registered information received at step S305, preparation of an e-mail showing that is also instructed.

[0062]

The control section 110 controls the communication section 170 to send the e-mail prepared by the mail server 160 to the mail address of the sales staff obtained at step S502 (stepS504), and terminates the process.

[0063]

The sales staff, referring to the received e-mail and recognizes that the customer can use the electric commerce from the web site, and utilizes that for the future sales activity.

[0064]

The above-described embodiment is so configured that an e-mail is sent to a sales staff. However, the destination of the e-mail is not limited to the sales staff. For example, it may be so configured that a customer information manager or the seller of the product items, etc., are notified in addition to the sales staff, simultaneously.

Further, in the above-described embodiment, for the sake of facilitating understanding, a sales staff is described as an example of a customer's corresponding staff. However, a customer's corresponding staff is not limited to the sales staff and may be a service staff or a maintenance staff.

[0065]

Further, in the above-described embodiment, it may so configured that, when a mail address of the customer is registered in the customer information registered in the customer information database 120, by preparing an e-mail on which the URL of the web site provided by the server 100 is described in hyper text and sending it to the mail address, the existence of the web site is notified. By configuring as described above, it is possible to promote the use of the service from the web site, including the electric commerce.

[0066]

The above-described embodiment is so configured that the control section 110 of the server 100 executes a program previously stored in the memory. However, these programs may be distributed by being stored to a computer-readable storage medium such as a Floppy (registered trademark) disk, a CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read

Only Memory), a DVD (Digital Versatile Disc). Or, by making a carrier wave carry these programs, the programs may be distributed via a communication network such as the Internet 200 to be downloaded to a computer.

[0067]

[Effect of the Invention]

As described above, according to the present invention, it is possible for a customer's corresponding staff to grasp information regarding a customer to develop a prompt sales activity, thereby realizing a high customer satisfaction and improvement in the sales activity.

[Brief Description of Drawings]

[FIG.1]

A diagram showing a configuration of the online registration supporting system according to the embodiment of the present invention.

[FIG.2]

A block diagram showing a configuration of the server shown in FIG. 1.

[FIG.3]

A diagram showing an example of information registered in the database shown in FIG.2; (a) shows an example of information registered in the customer information database; (b) shows an example of information registered in the member information database; and (c) shows an example of information registered in the staff information database.

[FIG.4]

A flowchart for illustrating the operation of the online registration supporting system according to the embodiment of the present invention.

[FIG.5]

A diagram showing an exemplary display of a menu page sent in the operation shown in FIG. 4.

[FIG.6]

A diagram showing an exemplary display of a user ID input page sent in the operation shown in FIG. 4.

[FIG.7]

A flowchart showing a registered information updating process shown in FIG. 4.

[FIG.8]

A diagram showing an exemplary display of a registered information sending form page shown in a registered information updating process in FIG.7.

[FIG.9]

A diagram showing an exemplary display of a notification confirmation page sent in the operation shown in FIG. 4.

[FIG.10]

A flowchart for explaining e-mail sending process for sending to the sales staff shown in FIG. 4.

[Explanation of Reference Numerals]

1 online registration supporting system

100 server

120 customer information database

130 member information database

140 staff information database

150 web server

160 mail server

200 the Internet

300-1 to 300-n user terminal

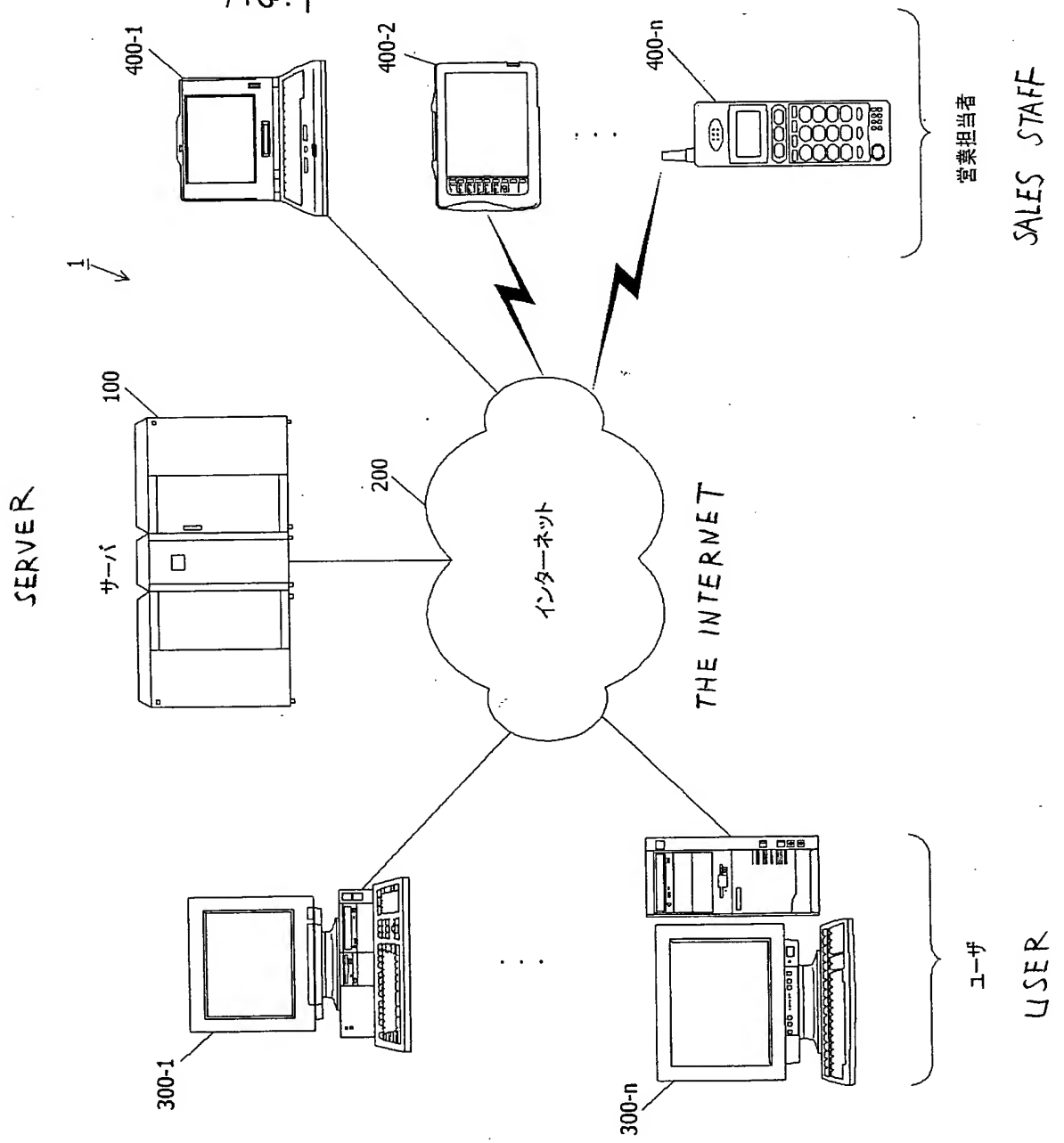
400-1 to 400-n sales staff terminal

NAME OF DOCUMENT

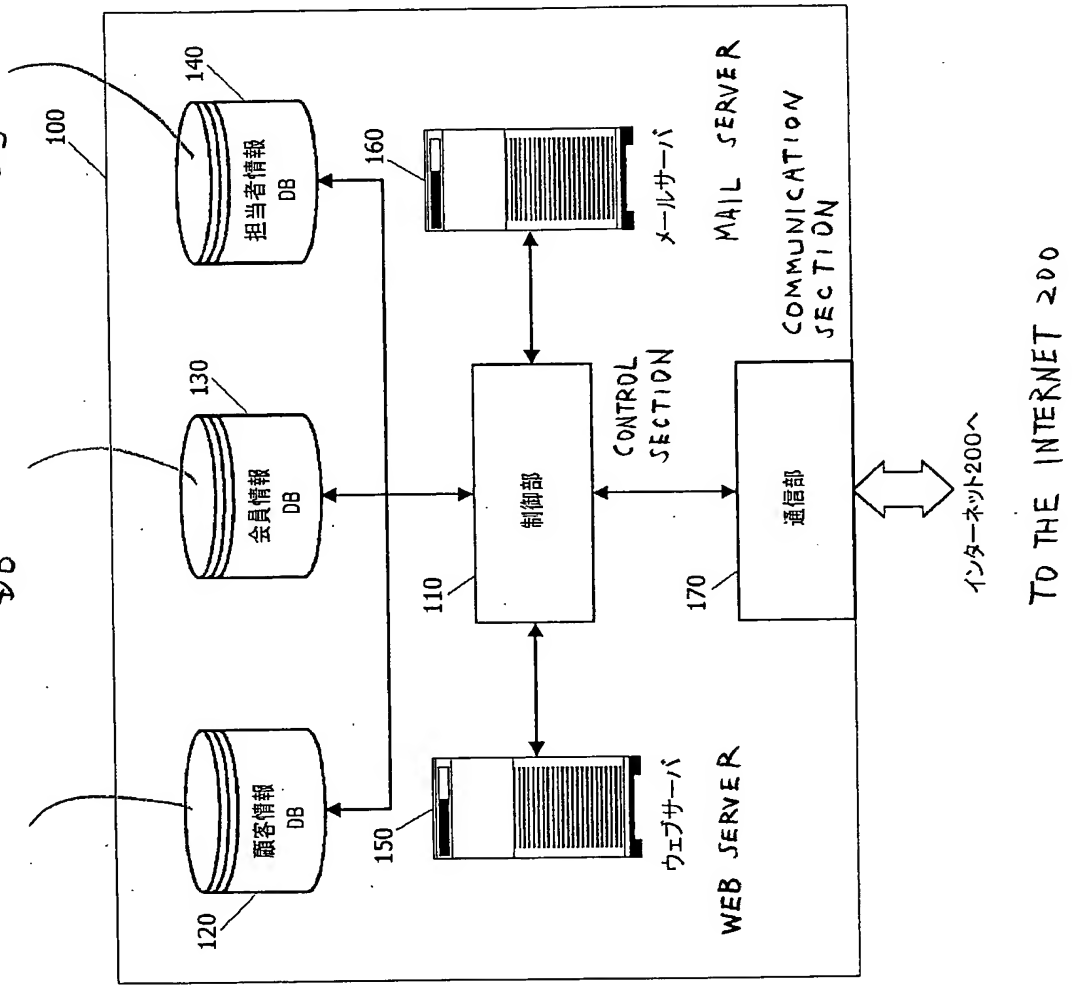
提出日　平成１３年　１月２９日
整理番号＝０１００３３２　　頁:　1/　8

【書類名】　図面　DRAWINGS

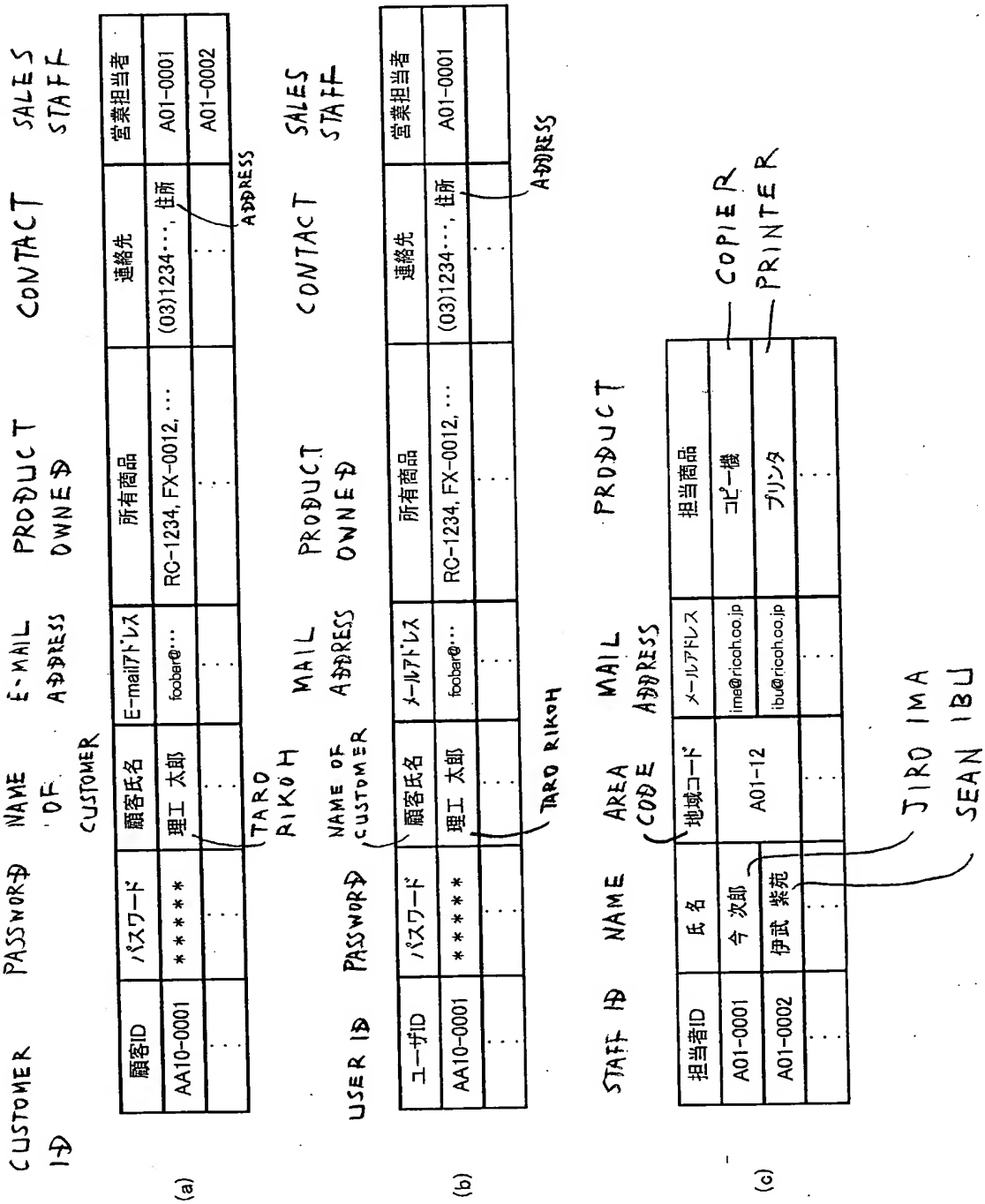
【図１】
FIG. 1



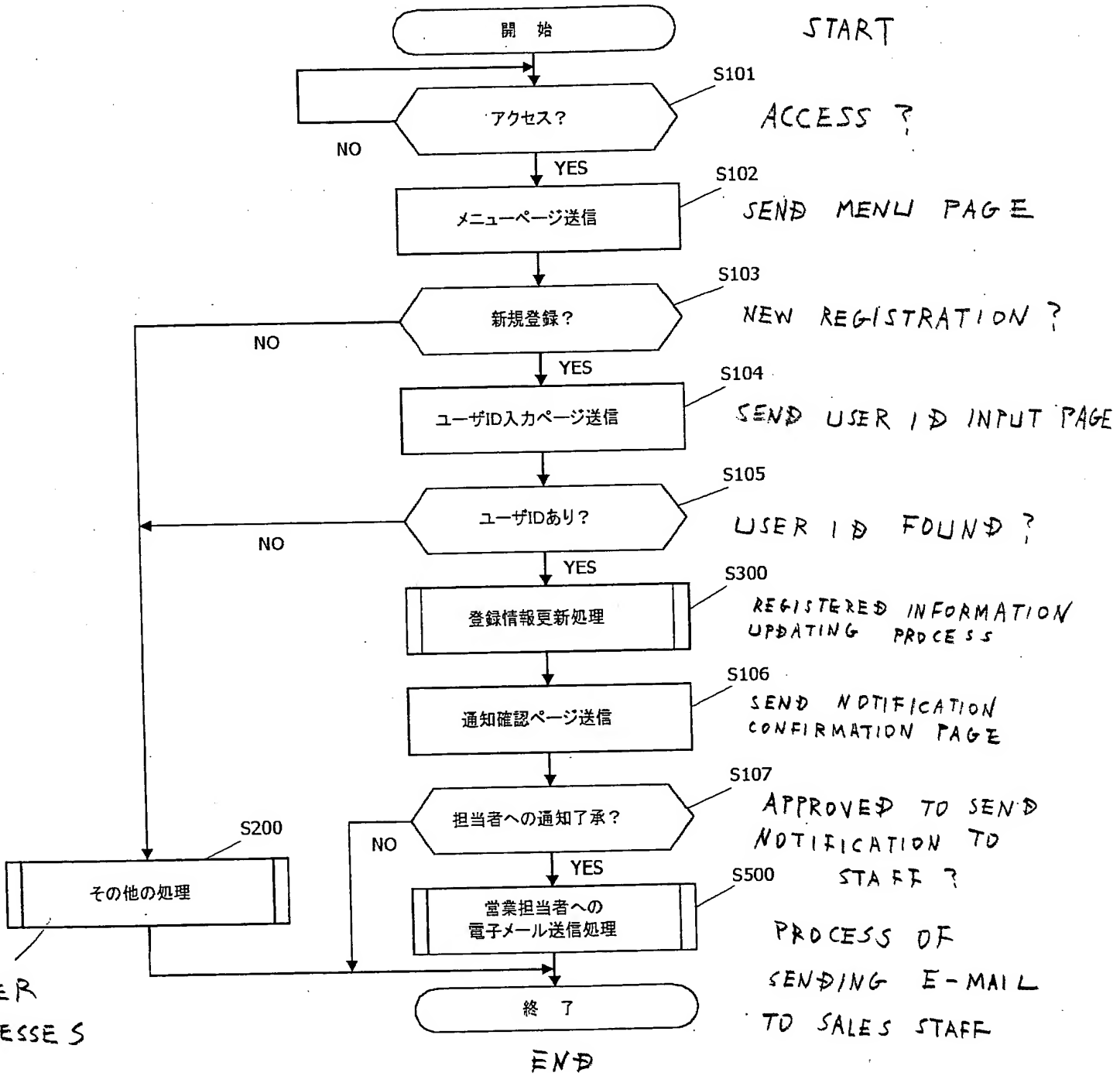
【図２】 FIG. 2


STAFF INFORMATION DB
MEMBER INFORMATION DB
CUSTOMER INFORMATION DB
100
140
担当者情報 DB
160
メールサーバ
MAIL SERVER
130
会員情報 DB
制御部
CONTROL SECTION
110
COMMUNICATION SECTION
通信部
170
インターネット200へ
TO THE INTERNET 200
120
顧客情報 DB
150
ウェブサーバ
WEB SERVER

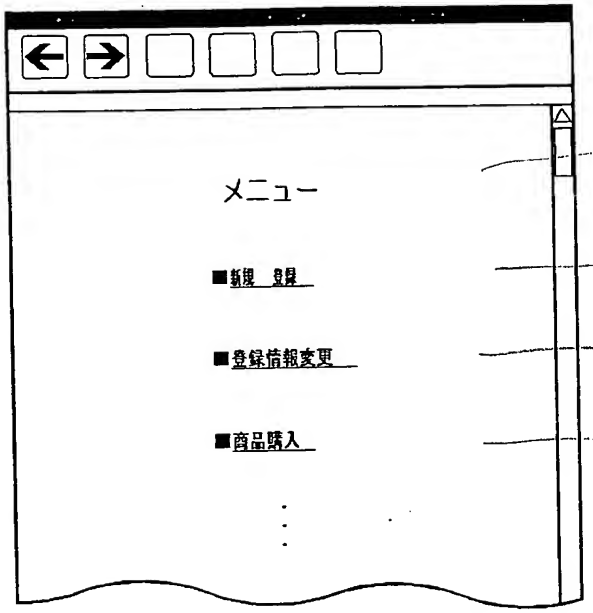
【図３】 FIG.3


CUSTOMER ID
PASSWORD
NAME OF CUSTOMER
E-MAIL ADDRESS
PRODUCT OWNED
CONTACT
SALES STAFF
顧客ID
パスワード
顧客氏名
E-mailアドレス
所有商品
連絡先
営業担当者
AA10-0001
*****
理工 太郎
foobar@…
RC-1234, FX-0012, …
(03)1234…, 住所
A01-0001
A01-0002
TARO RIKOH
ADDRESS
(a)
USER ID
PASSWORD
NAME OF CUSTOMER
MAIL ADDRESS
PRODUCT OWNED
CONTACT
SALES STAFF
ユーザID
パスワード
顧客氏名
メールアドレス
所有商品
連絡先
営業担当者
AA10-0001
*****
理工 太郎
foobar@…
RC-1234, FX-0012, …
(03)1234…, 住所
A01-0001
TARO RIKOH
ADDRESS
(b)
STAFF ID
NAME
AREA CODE
MAIL ADDRESS
PRODUCT
担当者ID
氏名
地域コード
メールアドレス
担当商品
A01-0001
今 次郎
A01-12
ima@ricoh.co.jp
コピー機
A01-0002
伊武 紫苑
ibu@ricoh.co.jp
プリンタ
COPIER
PRINTER
JIRO IMA
SEAN IBU
(c)

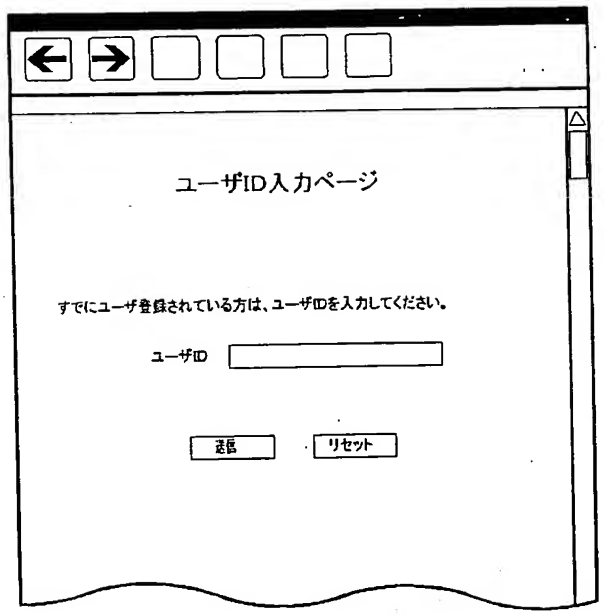
【図４】 FIG. 4


開　始
START
S101
アクセス？
ACCESS ?
NO
YES
S102
メニューページ送信
SEND MENU PAGE
S103
新規登録？
NEW REGISTRATION ?
NO
YES
S104
ユーザID入力ページ送信
SEND USER ID INPUT PAGE
S105
ユーザIDあり？
USER ID FOUND ?
NO
YES
S300
登録情報更新処理
REGISTERED INFORMATION UPDATING PROCESS
S106
通知確認ページ送信
SEND NOTIFICATION CONFIRMATION PAGE
S107
担当者への通知了承？
APPROVED TO SEND NOTIFICATION TO STAFF ?
NO
YES
S500
営業担当者への
電子メール送信処理
PROCESS OF SENDING E-MAIL TO SALES STAFF
S200
その他の処理
OTHER PROCESSES
終　了
END

【図５】　FIG. 5

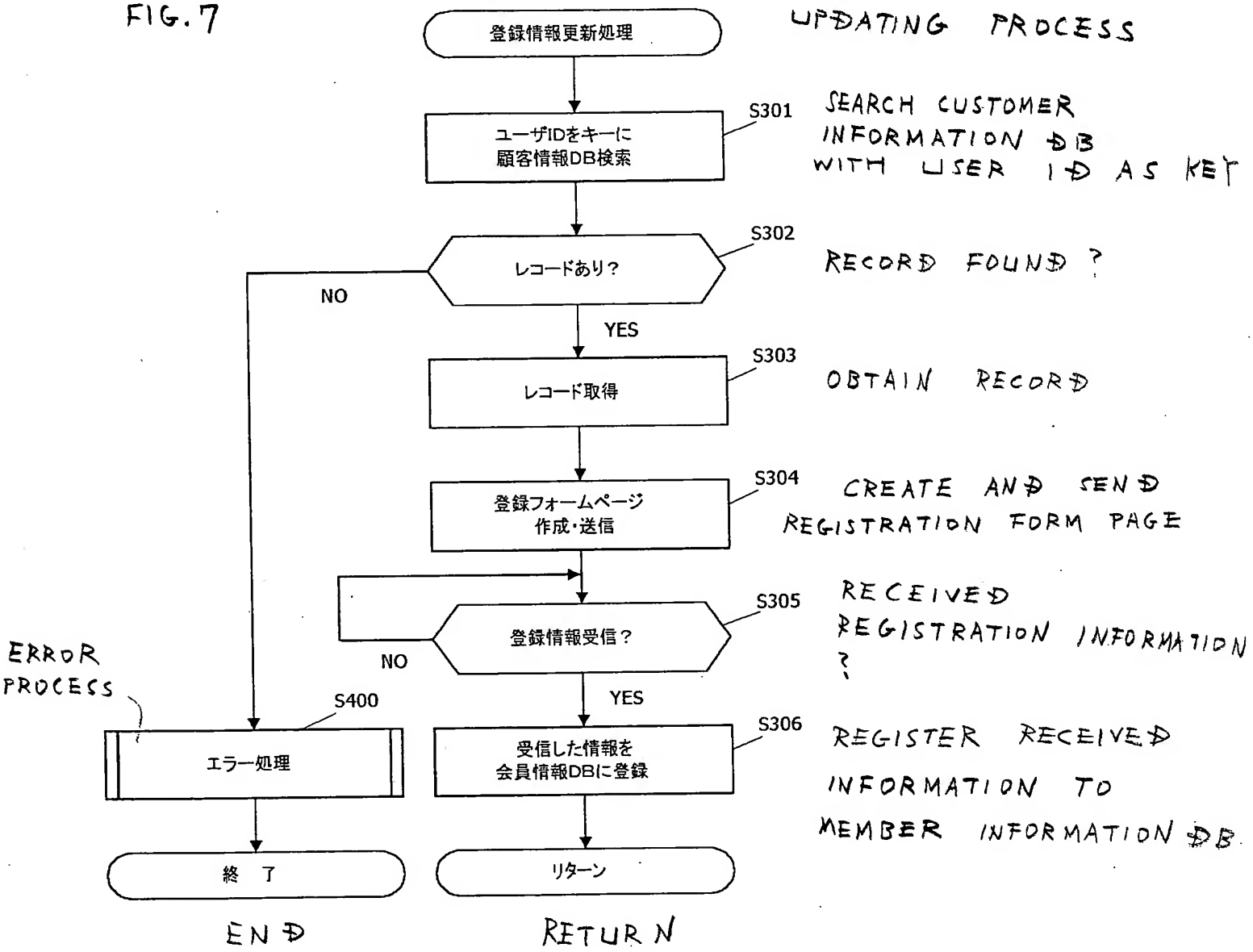


【図６】　FIG. 6



【図７】

FIG. 7



REGISTERED INFORMATION UPDATING PROCESS

SEARCH CUSTOMER INFORMATION DB WITH USER ID AS KEY

RECORD FOUND ?

OBTAIN RECORD

CREATE AND SEND REGISTRATION FORM PAGE

RECEIVED REGISTRATION INFORMATION ?

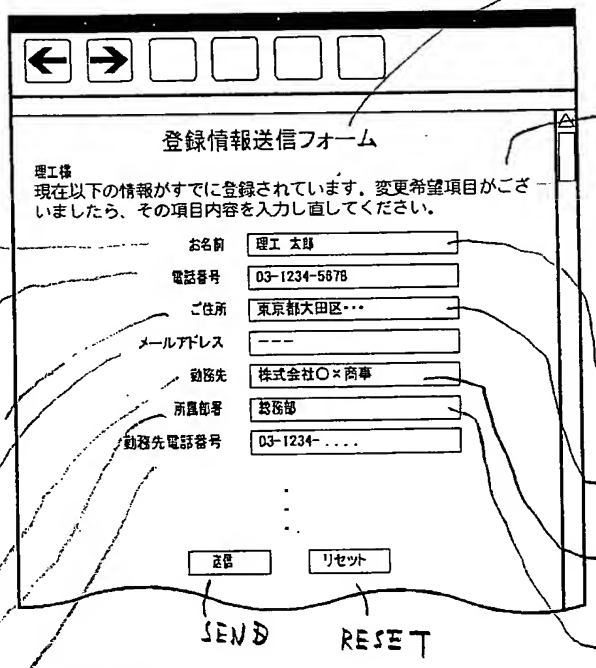
ERROR PROCESS

REGISTER RECEIVED INFORMATION TO MEMBER INFORMATION DB

END

RETURN

【図８】 FIG. 8



REGISTERED INFORMATION SENDING FORM

DEAR RIKOH:
FOLLOWING INFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED.
IF YOU WISH TO CHANGE ANY ITEM, PLEASE RE-INPUT THE ITEM.

NAME — TARO RIKOH

PHONE NUMBER — OHTA-KU, TOKYO ...

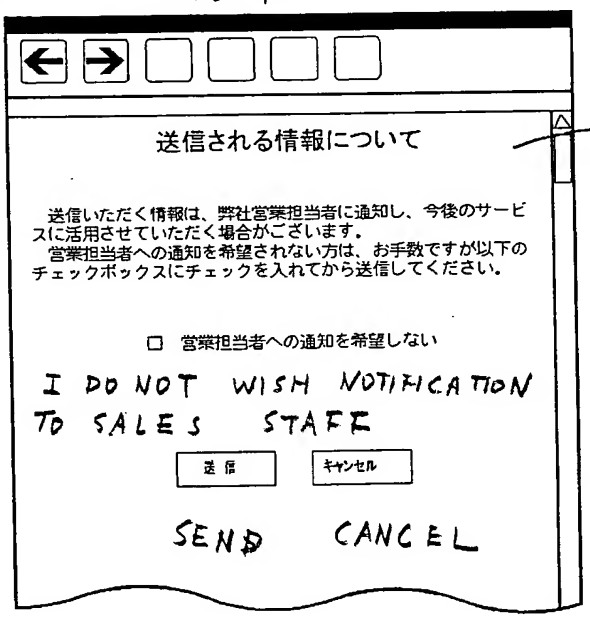
ADDRESS

E-MAIL ADDRESS — ABCD CORPORATION

OFFICE SECTION — GENERAL AFFAIRS

【図９】 FIG. 9

OFFICE PHONE NUMBER

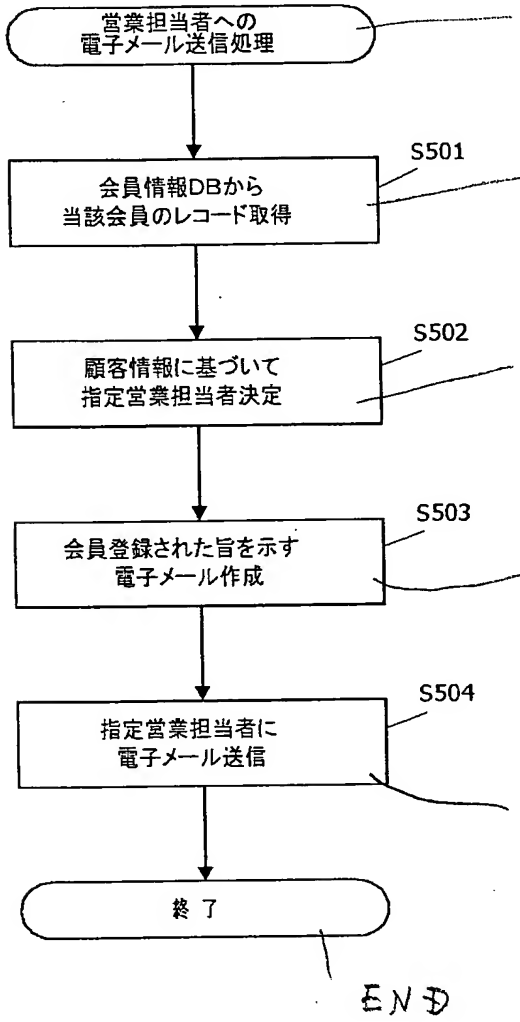


FOR INFORMATION TO BE TRANSMITTED

YOUR INFORMATION TO BE TRANSMITTED WILL BE NOTIFIED TO OUR SALES STAFF AND USED FOR FUTUR SERVICES IN SOME CASES.

IF YOU DO NOT WISH NOTIFICATION TO SALES STAFF, WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO CHECK FOLLOWING CHECK BOX BEFORE SENDING.

【図１０】　FIG. 10



PROCESS OF SENDING E-MAIL TO SALES STAFF

OBTAIN RECORD OF CORRESPONDING MEMBER FROM MEMBER INFORMATION DB

DETERMINE SALES STAFF TO BE SPECIFIED BASED ON CUSTOMER INFORMATION

PREPARE E-MAIL FOR INFORMING THAT MEMBER REGISTRATION HAS BEEN DONE

SEND E-MAIL TO SPECIFIED SALES STAFF

[Name of Document] Abstract

[Abstract]

[Object] To provide a method for supporting online registration, a server device, and a program which make electronic commerce and a real sales activity cooperate with each other to improve business efficiency by utilizing the e-mail, and to improve the customer satisfaction.

[Solution] A customer operates a user terminal 300 to access a web site provided by a serve 100, via the Internet 200. When accomplishing member registration from on the web site, in a case where customer information of the customer has previously been registered, the registered information is displayed on the user terminal 300. The server 100 receives new customer information from the user terminal 300 to perform member registration, and notifies a sales staff that the member registration by the customer is accomplished.

[Selected Drawing] FIG. 1

APPLICANT'S PAST DATA

Identification Number [000006747]

1.Date of Change August 24, 1990

[Reason of Change] New Registration

Address 3-6, Nakamagome 1-chome, Ohta-ku, Tokyo

Name Ricoh Company, Ltd.